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FIRM: United States Patent and Trademark Office
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Group Art Unit: 3679

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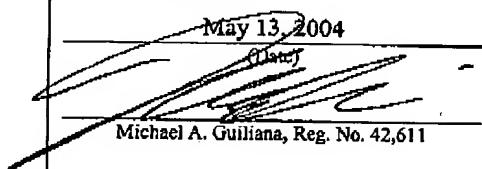
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AMENDMENT / RESPONSE TRANSMITTAL

Applicant : Stephen H. Albertson et al.
 App. No. : 10/728,693
 Filed : December 5, 2003
 For : CATEGORIZING
 FASTENERS AND
 CONSTRUCTION
 CONNECTORS USING
 VISUAL IDENTIFIERS
 Examiner : Neill R. Wilson
 Art Unit : 3679

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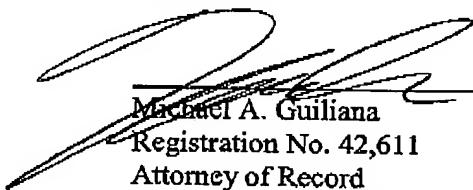
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Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing in the above-identified application are the following enclosures:

- (X) Preliminary Remarks in 2 pages.
- (X) The present application qualifies for small entity status under 37 C.F.R. § 1.27.
- (X) Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.


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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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 Appl. No. : 10/728,693
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Dear Sir:

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Prior to examination of the present application, Applicant submits the following remarks.

REMARKS

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Wilson for the courteous interview extended to applicants' counsel, Michael A. Giuliana, on April 22, 2004. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that it would helpful if Applicants submitted comments as to the relevance of U.S. Patent No. 5,511,917 issued to Dickson. In response, Applicants' counsel agreed to submit comments regarding the Dickson reference to the effect that the Dickson reference teaches one form of the prior art discussed in the Background section of the present application. For example, as set forth in the present application from page 2, line 17 through page 3, line 2:

Prior attempts to solve this problem have been unsuccessful. For example, one such attempt is described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,511,917 issued to Charles F. Dickson, the entirety of which is incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein. The Dickson patent describes a complex system in which numbers and clock like markings are inscribed into nail heads. The markings represent a pattern from which the length and/or gauge of the nail can be identified. However, because the size of the markings is limited by the size of the nail head, for very small nails, the markings cannot be distinguished unless one is within a close proximity (12" maximum) to the nail due to the small size of the inscription. This